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May 15, 1962

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Dear Mr. Chancellor:

I have just read Ambassador Dowling's report of his meeting with you, and I write to say simply that I am very glad of this good beginning in getting our relations back where they were in November. I am sure that as long as we can keep in this kind of touch directly and through our trusted advisers we shall be all right. I want to say, too, that I personally regret that my failure to give a formal answer to your letter of April 14th gave you concern. I did send a prompt oral response, which was necessary because I was out of town, and because a meeting with the Soviet Ambassador had been scheduled for the very next day -- but a letter should have followed; our relations to each other are too important to be marred by such matters.

In the same spirit let me say that I am sure the impression you formed of Secretary Rusk's message to Foreign Minister Schroeder was the result of an unhappy accident in the meaning of words in our two languages. I believe we are both very well served by our loyal and able Foreign Ministers, and for that matter by their professional staffs. They are trying to keep us together, and we must not be hard on them.

I am glad that you are giving your close personal attention to the papers now under discussion between our two governments, and we shall look forward to hearing your views. As I see the matter, our agreements greatly outweigh our differences, and we have time enough to work out a clear position before any paper goes on to the Soviets.

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At the same time, I think it is very clear that we shall all gain greatly if we can get this Berlin crisis moderated in a fashion that honorably protects both the people of Berlin and our own interests. We doubt if there is any prospect of a real settlement with the Soviets, but we do think there is a chance of getting this three-and-a-half-year-old crisis cooled off by an arrangement that centers on the very few things both sides can say in the same language. Our tactical purpose is to test this possibility -- and to do it in a way which continues to protect our common interests -- while proving to all concerned that a decent solution is possible whenever the Soviets are ready to accept it.

With warmest good wishes and with thanks again for your courtesy to Ambassador Dowling.

Sincerely,

His Excellency Dr. Konrad Adenauer
Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany
Bonn

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